Implementation of Art. 56 Brussels IIa in Greece

Following the formation of a specialized law drafting committee nearly 4 years ago, the implementation Act on cross border placement of children in accordance with Art. 56 Brussels IIa has been published in the Official State Gazette on June 23, 2017. The 'Act' constitutes part of a law, dealing with a number of issues irrelevant to the subject matter in question. The pertinent provisions are Articles 33-46 Law 4478/2017.

Art. 33 establishes the competent Central Authority, which is the Department for International Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Criminal Cases, attached to the Hellenic MoJ. Art. 34 lists the necessary documents to be submitted to the Greek Central Authority. Art. 35-37 state the requirements and the procedure for the placement of a child to an institution or a foster family in Greece. Advance payment for covering the essential needs of the child, and the duty of foreign Authorities to inform the respective Greek Central Authority in case of changes regarding the child's status, are covered under Art. 38 & 39 respectively.

Art. 40 regulates the reverse situation, i.e. the placement of a Greek minor to an institution or a foster family within an EU Member State. A prior consent of the competent foreign State Authority is imperative, pursuant to Art. 41. The necessary documents are listed under Art. 42, whereas the procedure to be followed is explained in Art. 43. The modus operandi regarding the transmission of the judgment to the foreign Authority is clarified in Art. 44. A duty of the Prosecution Office for minors to request information on the status of the child at least every six months is established under Art. 45. Finally, Art. 46 covers aspects of transitional nature.

Prima facie it should be stated that the implementing provisions are welcome. In a country where not a single domestic tool has been enacted in the field of judicial cooperation in civil matters since the Brussels Convention era, this move allows us to hope for further initiatives by the government. However, swiftness is the key word in the matter at stake, and I wouldn't be sure whether the procedure enacted would fully serve the cause.

Beyond that, there are some other hot topics related to the Brussels IIa Regulation and its implementation in Greece, the first and foremost being the rules and procedures for issuing the certificates referred to in Art. 39, 41 & 42 [Annexes I-IV of the Regulation]. Bearing in mind that the latter forms almost part of the court's daily routine (at least in major first instance courts of the country), priority should have been given to an implementing act providing guidance on this issue, in stead of opting to elaborate on a matter with seemingly minimal practical implications.

Last but not least, it should be reminded that a relevant study has been released last year, commissioned by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the JURI Committee of the European Parliament, which may be retrieved here.

Complaint against France for a violation of several obligations arising from the Rome III and Brussels IIbis Regulations

On 19 April 2017, Professor Cyril Nourissat and the lawyers Alexandre Boiché, Delphine Eskenazi, Alice Meier-Bourdeau and Gregory Thuan filed a complaint with the European Commission against France for a violation of several obligations arising from the European Rome III and Brussels II*bis* Regulations, as a result of the divorce legislation reform entered into force on 1 January this year. The following summary has been kindly provided by Dr. Boiché.

"Indeed, since January the 1st, in the event of a global settlement between the spouses, the divorce agreement is no longer reviewed and approved in Court by a French judge. The agreement is merely recorded in a private contract, signed by the spouses and their respective lawyers. Such agreement is subsequently registered by a French *notaire*, which allows the divorce agreement to be an

enforceable document under French law. From a judicial divorce, the French divorce, in the event of an agreement between the spouses, has become a purely administrative divorce. The judge only intervenes if a minor child requests to be heard.

The implications and consequences of this reform in an international environment were deliberately ignored by the French legislator, with a blatant disregard for the high proportion of divorce with an international component in France. The main violations arising from this reform are the following.

First of all, as there will be no control of the jurisdiction, anyone will be able to get a divorce by mutual consent in France, even though they have absolutely no connection with France whatsoever. For instance, a couple of German spouses living in Spain will now be able to use this new method of divorce, in breach of the provisions of the Brussels II*bis* Regulation. The new divorce legislation is also problematic in so far as it remains silent on the law applicable to the divorce.

Moreover, the Brussels II*bis* Regulation states that the judge, when he grants the divorce (and therefore rules on the visitation rights upon the children, or issues a support order, for instance) provides the spouses with certificates, that grant direct enforceability to his decision in the other member states. Yet, the new divorce legislation only authorizes the notary to deliver the certificate granting enforceability to the dissolution of the marriage itself, but not the certificate related to the visitation rights, nor the support order. This omission is problematic insofar as it will force the spouses who seek to enforce their agreement in another member state to seize the local Courts.

Last but not least, article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union makes it imperative for the child's best interests to be taken into consideration above all else, and article 41 of the Brussels II*bis* Regulation provides that the child must be heard every time a decision is taken regarding his residency and/or visitation rights, unless a neutral third party deems it unnecessary. Yet, under the new legislation, it is only the parents of the child who are supposed to inform him that he can be heard, which hardly meets the European requirements. Moreover, article 12 of the Brussels II*bis* Regulation provides that, when a Court is seized whereas it isn't the Court of the child's habitual residence, it can only accept its jurisdiction if it matches the child's best interests. Once again, the absence of any judicial control will allow divorces to be

granted in France about children who never lived there, without any consideration for their interests. This might be the main violation of the European legislation issued by this reform.

For all those reasons, the plaintiffs recommend that the Union invites France to undertake the necessary changes, in order for this new legislation to fit harmoniously in the European legal space. In particular, they suggest a mandatory reviewal by the judge in the presence of an international component, such as the foreign citizenship of one of the spouses, or a foreign habitual residence. They would also like this new divorce to be prohibited in the presence of a minor child, an opinion shared by the French 'Défenseur des Droits'"

The full text of the complaint (in French) is available here.

Conference Report – Property regimes of international couples and the law of succession

On the 9th and 10th of March 2017, the Academy of European Law (ERA) hosted the conference "Property regimes of international couples and the law of succession" in Trier, Germany. It gave an opportunity to more than 60 academics and practitioners of 24 different nationalities to discuss property aspects of marriage and registered partnerships at European level. The focus has been put on the two new additions to European family, i.e. the property regime Regulations (No 2016/1103 and 2016/1104) and their interplay with the already applicable Succession Regulation (No 650/2012).

This post by ***Amandine Faucon***, research fellow at the MPI Luxembourg, provides an overview of the presentations and the discussions held at the Conference.

Setting the scene

Enhanced cooperation in family matters: genesis of the Regulations – María Vilar Badia (EU Commission) explained that the aim of the Regulations was to complete the existing European family law framework. In that perspective, two texts were proposed to the European legislator in 2011 but were rejected, after four years of negotiations, by Poland and Hungary. The main obstacle was the indirect recognition of same-sex couples. Given the lack of necessary unanimity, the Council suggested adopting the already negotiated texts through the enhanced cooperation process. This approach was supported and six months later, in June 2016, the instruments were adopted by eighteen Member States.

A comprehensive set of EU rules on international family estate law – Prof. Dieter Martiny acknowledged the broad scope of EU Regulations, now covering almost all aspects of family life. He briefly presented each of these instruments as well as their material scope. Furthermore, he discussed the interplay of the new Regulations with the already applicable ones, especially with regard to characterization matters, since one act can raise questions that have to be solved under different texts (e.g.: donation). He then presented the recurrent features of all existing instruments, e.g. the existence of party autonomy, and pointed out some issues such as the lack of common general provisions.

New rules on matrimonial property regimes

Jurisdiction in case of death or divorce and in all other cases – Prof. Costanza Honorati illustrated the characterisation issue notably with the concept of marriage and registered partnership. Regarding jurisdiction, she stated that the new Regulations fulfil classical private International law objectives by aiming at concentrating jurisdiction, through a reference to the forum successionis and the forum divortii, and at favoring the application of the lex fori by making a detour by the applicable law, in case it is a chosen one. For the rest, habitual residence and nationality are the main criteria.

Applicable law, its scope and effects in respect of third parties and which choices can be made? – Dr. Ian Summer first explained the difficulty of knowing which Regulation to apply through the example of a relationship being considered as a marriage in a country and a registered partnership in a second. He then criticized the exclusion of pension rights which are a significant part of patrimonial disputes. As regard to applicable law, he explained the main features of the new Regulations: unity, universality and a hierarchy of connecting factor in

the absence of a choice of law. The latter, being the privileged factor, was particularly detailed notably as regard to the different choice possible and the formal conditions to be fulfilled. The effects of the law applicable with respect to third party were also addressed.

Special rules for property consequences of registered partnerships – María Vilar Badia laid out the differences existing between the Regulation on matrimonial property regime (No 2016/1103) and the Regulation on the property consequences of registered partnerships (No 2016/1104). The overall objective of the legislator was to have very similar text so that both types of relationships are treated equally. The differences are therefore rare and consist of additional safeguards to protect registered partners, as this status does not exist in every participating State.

Crossover: property regimes and succession law

Workshop: Making the right choice – party autonomy in property & succession law

Within the workshop the following case has been set as working hypothesis: An Italian and an Austrian got married in Belgium where they lived for six months before moving to Germany. The wife bought a holiday apartment in Antibes and received a flat in Italy. After a while, they separated and the wife moved back to Italy. The participants addressed the relevant questions of property regime, divorce, succession and maintenance. The concept of habitual residence and the application of party autonomy as a tool to achieve some coherence were particularly examined. The participants concluded that there is no unique answer to the case and that the final outcome largely depends on the will of the parties involved. It is, therefore, fundamental for practitioners to carefully provide legal advises to their clients.

Equalization of accrued gains and pension rights adjustment – Peter Junggeburth discussed the characterization problem regarding pension rights and its impact on the increase in the share of the succession or divorce. The presentation was given from the point of view of German inheritance and matrimonial property law but contemplated the impact of the questions raised in cross-border situations.

Planning cross-border successions

Options for drafting a last will under the EU Succession Regulation: first experiences – Dr. Julie Francastel first considered the general rule – the law of the last habitual residence of the deceased – and raised the issue of determining the habitual residence. She used the case of a retired person living part-time in Mallorca and part-time in Germany as an example. In that situation, choosing the law applicable can be advisable. She stressed the impact of such a choice on jurisdiction and added that a choice should be considered even if a situation does not bear cross-border elements at first sight. The formal conditions of the choice and the issue of succession contracts (that do not exist in every Member States) were also addressed.

European Certificate of Succession and the division of the estate – Dr. Jan-Ger Knot presented the European Certificate of Succession (hereafter ECS) and its objectives. He stressed that its operation in practice remains very unclear and leads to many difficulties for practitioners. It was also recalled that depending on the Member State, the authorities issuing the ECS can be a Notary or a Court. He then described the effects of the ECS and the different means to challenge it. The problem of conflicting ECS was also addressed and in this respect the European Network of Registers of Wills Association has been introduced as a possible solution.

Paying inheritance tax twice? – Prof. Alain Steichen first gave an overview of the main reasons leading to double taxation: the location of the deceased, heirs and assets in Member States having different taxation systems. Given the increasing mobility of citizens and purchases abroad, the problem is expanding but there are no possibilities to force Member States to avoid double taxation. He presented the Model for treaties on double taxation on inheritance from the OECD (1982) and the EU recommendation (2011) favoring the taxation at the residence of the heir but their impact is limited. A common rule to be followed by every State should be imposed to avoid the problem.

Hands-on experience: Planning cross-border successions with a view to third states and offshore jurisdictions

EU and Switzerland – Tobias Somary first indicated that internationality is becoming normality and therefore stressed the importance of estate planning. In that regard, the law applicable to matrimonial property regime should be carefully considered, as it can significantly impact the size of the estate and its

distribution at the dissolution of the matrimonial regime. He then turned to the inheritance question and stressed that according to the Succession Regulation the law of a non-member State, such as Switzerland, can be applied to the inheritance. He, therefore, advised to plan the succession carefully and gave some examples as an illustration of the possible difficulties.

UK before & after BREXIT and off-shore jurisdictions – Alex Ruffel explained that the UK is not part of the Succession Regulation and therefore applies its own private International law. She presented the related English provisions and illustrated them with practical examples. She then stressed out the present uncertainty as to whether the UK should be considered as a third State with regard to the application of Article 34 of the Succession Regulation (renvoi). This problem will vanish post-Brexit and is the only before/after difference regarding successions. Concerning off-shore jurisdictions, she explained that although most have a common law system, creating a trust or a company is advisable to avoid further complications.

The concluding remarks were presented by Prof. Dieter Martiny who noted the willingness of the EU to ease the life of European citizens but stressed that many uncertainties remain and lay in the hands of the European Court of Justice.

Job Vacancy: PhD Position/Fellow at the University of Bonn, Germany

The Institute for Private International and Comparative Law, University of Bonn, Germany, is looking for one highly skilled and motivated PhD candidate and fellow (Wissenschaftliche/r Mitarbeiter/in) on a part-time basis (50%) as of 1 June 2017.

The successful candidate holds a first law degree (ideally the First German State Examination) and is interested in the international dimensions of private law, in

particular private international law, European law and/or comparative law. A very good command of German and English is expected; good IT skills are required.

The fellow will be given the opportunity to conduct his/her PhD project (according to the Faculty's regulations). The position is paid according to the German public salary scale E-13 TV-L, 50% (about 1300 Euro net per month). The initial contract period is two to three years, with an option to be extended. Responsibilities include supporting the Institute's director, Professor Dr Matthias Lehmann, in his research and teaching as well as independent teaching obligations (2 hours per week during term time).

If you are interested in this position, please send your application (cover letter in German; CV; and relevant documents and certificates, notably university transcripts and a copy of law degree) to lehrstuhl.lehmann@jura.uni-bonn.de by April 10, 2017. The University of Bonn is an equal opportunity employer.

The job advert in full detail is accessible here.

Praxis des Internationalen Privat- und Verfahrensrechts (IPRax) 1/2017: Abstracts

The latest issue of the "Praxis des Internationalen Privat- und Verfahrensrechts (IPRax)" features the following articles:

H.-P. Mansel/K. Thorn/R. Wagner: **European conflict of laws 2016: Brexit ante portas!**
The article provides an overview of developments in Brussels in the field of judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters from December 2015 until November 2016. It summarizes current projects and new instruments that are presently making their way through the EU legislative process. It also refers to the laws enacted at the national level in Germany as a result of new European

instruments. Furthermore, the authors look at areas of law where the EU has made use of its external competence. They discuss both important decisions and pending cases before the ECJ as well as important decisions from German courts pertaining to the subject matter of the article. In addition, the article also looks at current projects and the latest developments at the Hague Conference of Private International Law.

P. Mankowski: **Modern Types of Migration in Private International Law**
Migration has become a ubiquitous phenomenon in modern times. Modern immigration law has developed a plethora of possible reactions and has established many different types of migrants. Private international law has to respond to these developments. The decisive watershed is as to whether a migrant has acquired refugee status under the Geneva Refugees Conventions. If so, domicile substitutes for nationality. A mere petition for asylum does not trigger this. But subsidiary protection as an equivalent status introduced by EU asylum law must be placed on equal footing. Where habitual residence is at stake, it does matter whether a residence has been acquired legally or illegally under the auspices of immigration law. Yet for judging whether a habitual residence exists, the extension of permits might be a factor.

C. Mäsch/B. Gausing/M. Peters: **Pseudo-foreign Ltd., PLC and LLP: Limited in liability or rather in longevity? – The Brexit's impact on English corporations having their central administration in Germany**
On 23rd of June 2016, the people of the United Kingdom voted in a referendum against the UK staying in the European Union. If, as can be expected, the withdrawal negotiations under Art. 50 of the EU Treaty will not address the issue of pseudo-English corporations operating in the remaining Member States of the EU, the Brexit will have severe consequences for companies incorporated under English law (e.g. a Ltd., PLC or LLP) having their central administrative seat in Germany. No longer protected by the freedom of establishment within the EU (Art. 49, 54 TFEU) these legal entities will be under German PIL and the so-called Sitztheorie subjected to domestic German company law. They will thus be considered simple partnership companies (German GbR or OHG), losing from one day to the next i.a. their limited liability status – an unexpected and unjustified windfall profit for creditors, a severe blow for the company shareholders. In this paper it will be argued that the outcome can and indeed should be rectified by resorting to the legal rationale of Art. 7 para 2 EGBGB (Introductory Act to the

German Civil Code). This provision preserves the legal capacity of a natural person irrespectively of whether a change in the applicable law stipulates otherwise. Extending that concept to legal entities will create a "grace period" with a fixed duration of three years during which the English law continues to apply to a "German" Ltd., PLC or LLP, giving the shareholders time to decide whether to transform or re-establish their company.

L. Rademacher: **Codification of the Private International Law of Agency – On the Draft Bill Submitted by the Federal Ministry of Justice**

Based on a resolution adopted by the German Council for Private International Law, the German Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection has submitted a bill to amend the Introductory Act to the German Civil Code (EGBGB) in the to date uncodified area of agency in private international law. This paper provides an overview of the proposed Art. 8 EGBGB and identifies questions of interpretation as well as remaining gaps. The draft provision applies to agents who were authorized by the principal, i.e. neither to statutory agents nor to representatives under company law. The proposal strengthens party autonomy by allowing a choice of law. Absent a choice of law, the applicable law is determined by objective criteria depending on the type of agent. The respective connecting factors, such as the agent's or principal's habitual residence, require perceptibility for the third party. If these requirements are not met, the applicable law residually is determined by the identifiable place of the agent's acts or by the principal's habitual residence. For the most part, the proposal can be characterized as a restatement of previous case law and academic writing.

H. Roth: **Rule and exceptions regarding the review of the European Order of Payment in exceptional cases according to art.20 par. 2 of Reg. (EC) 1896/2006**

According to Art. 20 para. 2 of Reg. (EC) 1896/2006, the European Order of Payment can be reviewed in exceptional cases. This additional legal remedy is only applicable in exceptional cases such as collusion or other malicious use of process. It is not sufficient that the defendant would have been able to detect misrepresentations by the claimant.

M. Pika/M.-P. Weller: **Private Divorces and European Private International Law**

Whilst substantive German family law requires a divorce to be declared in court, the instant case addresses the effect of a private divorce previously undertaken in

Latakia (Arabic Republic of Syria) under Syrian law. Although, from a German perspective, the Syrian Sharia Court's holding has been merely declaratory, the European Court of Justice considered its effect before German courts to be a matter of recognition. Accordingly, it rejected the admissibility of the questions referred to the Court concerning the Rome III Regulation. This ruling indicates the unexpected albeit preferable *obiter dictum* that the Brussels II bis Regulation applies on declaratory decisions concerning private divorces issued by Member States' authorities. Subsequently, the Higher Regional Court Munich initiated a further, almost identical preliminary ruling concerning the Rome III Regulation. However, the key difference is that it now considered the Regulation to be adopted into national law.

A. Spickhoff: **Fraudulent Inducements to Contract in the System of Jurisdiction – Classification of (contractual or legal) basis of claims and accessory jurisdiction**

Manipulation of mileage and concealment of accidental damage belong to the classics of car law and indicate a fraud. But is it possible to qualify a fraudulent misrepresentation in this context as a question of tort with the meaning of art. 7 no. 2 Brussels I Regulation (recast)? German courts deny that with respect to decisions of the European Court of Justice. The author criticizes this rejection.

K. Siehr: **In the Labyrinth of European Private International Law. Recognition and Enforcement of a Foreign Decision on Parental Responsibility without Appointment of a Guardian of the Child Abroad**

A Hungarian woman and a German man got married. In 2010 a child was born. Two years later the marriage broke down and divorce proceedings were instituted by the wife in Hungary. The couple signed an agreement according to which the child should live with the mother and the father had visitation rights until the final divorce decree had been handed down and the right of custody had to be determined by the court. The father wrongfully retained the child in Germany after having exercised his visitation rights. The mother turned to a court in Hungary which, by provisional measures, decided that rights of custody should be exclusively exercised by the mother and the father had to return the child to Hungary. German courts of three instances recognized and enforced the Hungarian decree to return the child according to Art. 23 and 31 (2) Brussels IIbis-Regulation. The *Bundesgerichtshof* (BGH) as the final instance decided that the Hungarian court had jurisdiction under Art. 8–14 Brussels IIbis-Regulation

and did not apply national remedies under Art. 20 Brussels IIbis-Regulation. In German law, the hearing of the child was neither necessary nor possible and therefore the Hungarian return order did not violate German public policy under Art. 23 (a) or (b) Brussels IIbis-Regulation.

H. Dörner: **Better too late than never – The classification of § 1371 Sect. 1 German Civil Code as relating to matrimonial property in German and European Private International Law**

After more than 40 years of discussion the German Federal Supreme Court finally (and rightly so) has classified § 1371 Sect. 1 of the German Civil Code as relating to matrimonial property. However, the judgment came too late as the European Succession Regulation No 650/2012 OJ 2012 L 201/07 started to apply on 17 August 2015 thus reopening the question of classification in a new context. The author argues that a matrimonial property classification of § 1371 Sect. 1 German Civil Code under European rules is still appropriate. He discusses two problems of assimilation resulting from such a classification considering how the instrument of assimilation has to be handled after the regulation came into force. Furthermore, he points out that a matrimonial property classification creates a set of new problems which have to be solved in the near future (e.g. documentation of the surviving spouse's share in the European Certificate of Succession, application of different matrimonial property regimes depending of the Member state in question).

H. Buxbaum: **RICO's Extraterritorial Application: RJR Nabisco, Inc. v. European Community**

In 2000, the European Community filed a lawsuit against RJR Nabisco (RJR) in U.S. federal court, alleging violations of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). After more than fifteen years and a number of intermediate judicial decisions, the litigation came to its likely close in 2016 with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *RJR Nabisco, Inc.* v. *European Community*. The Court held that RICO's private cause of action does not extend to claims based on injuries suffered outside the United States, denying the European Community any recovery. The case was the third in recent years in which the Supreme Court applied the "presumption against extraterritoriality," a tool of statutory interpretation, to determine the geographic reach of a U.S. federal law. Together, these opinions have effected a shift in the Court's jurisprudence toward more expansive application of the presumption – a shift whose effect is to

constrain quite significantly the application of U.S. regulatory law in cross-border cases. The Court's opinion in RJR proceeds in two parts. The first addresses the geographic scope of RICO's substantive provisions, analyzing whether the statute's prohibition of certain forms of conduct applies to acts occurring outside the United States. The second addresses the private cause of action created by the statute, asking whether it permits a plaintiff to recover compensation for injury suffered outside the United States. After beginning with a brief overview of the lawsuit, this essay discusses each of these parts in turn.

T. Lutzi: **Special Jurisdiction in Matters Relating to Individual Contracts of Employment and Tort for Cases of Unlawful Enticement of Customers**
A claim brought against two former employees, who had allegedly misappropriated customer data of the claimant, and against a competitor, who had allegedly used said data to entice some of the claimant's customers, provided the Austrian *Oberster Gerichtshof* with an opportunity to interpret the rules on special jurisdiction for matters relating to individual contracts of employment in Art. 18–21 of the Brussels I Regulation (Art. 20–23 of the recast) and for matters relating to tort in Art. 5 No. 3 of the Brussels I Regulation (Art. 7 (2) of the recast). Regarding the former, the court defined the scope of Art. 18–21 by applying the formula developed by the European Court of Justice in *Brogsitter* concerning the distinction between Art. 5 No. 1 and 3 (Art. 7 (1) and (2) of the recast); regarding the latter, the court allowed the claim to be brought at the claimant's seat as this was the place where their capacity to do business was impaired. Both decisions should be welcomed.

The international protection of vulnerable adults: recent developments from Brussels and

The Hague

On 10 November 2016, the French MEP Joëlle Bergeron submitted to the Committee on Legal Affairs of the European Parliament a draft report regarding the protection of vulnerable adults.

The draft report comes with a set of recommendations to the European Commission. Under the draft, the European Parliament, among other things, 'deplores the fact that the Commission has failed to act on Parliament's call that it should submit … a report setting out details of the problems encountered and the best practices noted in connection with the application of the Hague Convention [of 13 January 2000 on the international protection of adults], and 'calls on the Commission to submit … before 31 March 2018, pursuant to Article 81(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, a proposal for a regulation designed to improve cooperation among the Member States and the automatic recognition and enforcement of decisions on the protection of vulnerable adults and mandates in anticipation of incapacity'.

A document annexed to the report lists the 'principles and aims' of the proposal that the Parliament expects to receive from the Commission.

In particular, following the suggestions illustrated in a study by the European Parliamentary Service, the regulation should, *inter alia*, 'grant any person who is given responsibility for protecting the person or the property of a vulnerable adult the right to obtain within a reasonable period a certificate specifying his or her status and the powers which have been conferred on him or her', and 'foster the enforcement in the other Member States of protection measures taken by the authorities of a Member State, without a declaration establishing the enforceability of these measures being required'. The envisaged regulation should also 'introduce single mandate in anticipation of incapacity forms in order to facilitate the use of such mandates by the persons concerned, and the circulation, recognition and enforcement of mandates'.

In the meanwhile, on 15 December 2016, Latvia signed the Hague Convention of 2000 on the international protection of adults. According to the press release circulated by the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the Convention is anticipated to be ratified by Latvia in 2017.

A study of the European Parliament on the protection of vulnerable adults in cross-border situations

The European Parliamentary Research Service has published a study, authored by *Christian Salm*, to support a legislative initiative report on the protection of vulnerable adults to be prepared by the French MEP *Joëlle Bergeron*.
The purpose of the study is to provide an objective evaluation of the potential added value of taking legislative action at EU level in this field, in particular where a cross-border element is present.

The study builds on expert research carried out for the purpose by *Ian Curry-Sumner* of the Voorts Juridische Diensten (Dordrecht), on the one hand, and by *Pietro Franzina* of the University of Ferrara and *Joëlle Long* of the University of Turin, on the other. The research papers are annexed to the study.

The study argues that, together with the ratification of the Hague Convention of 13 January 2000 on the international protection of adults by all EU Member States, the adoption of certain EU legal measures would create a more reliable legal framework for the protection of vulnerable adults in cross-border situations than is currently the case. This would constitute an added value in itself, and would also contribute to reducing legal and emotional costs for vulnerable adults when facing issues in a cross-border situation.

The proposed measures, which could be adopted on the basis of Article 81 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, include: (i) enhancing cooperation and communication among authorities of EU Member States in this area; (ii) abolishing the requirement of exequatur for measures of protection taken in EU Member States; (iii) creating a European certificate of powers

granted for the protection of an adult; (iv) enabling the adult, under appropriate safeguards, to choose in advance the EU Member States whose courts should be deemed to possess jurisdiction to take measures concerning his or her protection; (v) providing for the continuing jurisdiction of the courts of the EU Member State of the former habitual residence.

Conference: "Le successioni internazionali in Europa" (International Successions in Europe) – Rome, 13 October 2016

The Faculty of Law of the **University of Rome "La Sapienza"** will host a German-Italian-Spanish conference on **Thursday, 13th October 2016, on International Successions in Europe**. The conference has been convened for the **presentation of the volume "The EU Succession Regulation: a Commentary"**, edited by Alfonso-Luís Calvo Caravaca (University "Carlos III" of Madrid), Angelo Davì (University of Rome "La Sapienza") and Heinz-Peter Mansel (University of Cologne), published by Cambridge University Press, 2016. The volume is the product of a research project on "The Europeanization of Private International Law of Successions" financed through the European Commission's Civil Justice Programme.

Here is the programme (available as .pdf):

Welcome addresses: *Prof. Enrico del Prato* (Director, Department of Legal Sciences, University "La Sapienza"); *Prof. Paolo Ridola* (Dean, Faculty of Law, University "La Sapienza"); *Prof. Angelo Davì* (University "La Sapienza").

First Session

Chair: *Prof. Ugo Villani* (University of Bari, President of SIDI-ISIL – Italian Society

for International Law)

- *Prof. Javier Carrascosa González* (University of Murcia): La residenza abituale e la clausola di eccezione (Habitual Residence and Exception Clause);
- *Prof. Cristina Campiglio* (University of Pavia): La facoltà di scelta del diritto applicabile (Choice of the Applicable Law by the Testator);
- *Prof. Erik Jayme* (University of Heidelberg): Metodi classici e nuove norme di conflitto: il regolamento relativo alle successioni (Traditional Methods and New Conflict Rules: the EU Regulation Concerning Succession);
- *Prof. Claudio Consolo* (University "La Sapienza"): Il coordinamento tra le giurisdizioni (Coordination between Jurisdictions).

Second Session

Chair: *Prof. Sergio Maria Carbone* (University of Genova)

- *Prof. Peter Kindler* (University of Munich): I patti successori (Agreements as to Succession);
- Round Table: The European Certificate of Succession
  Introduction: *Prof. Claudio Consolo* (University "La Sapienza");
  Participants: *Dr. Ana Fernández Tresguerres* (Notary in Madrid); *Dr. Paolo Pasqualis* (Notary in Portogruaro); *Dr. Fabian Wall* (Notary in Ludwigshafen).

Concluding remarks: *Prof. Sergio Maria Carbone* (University of Genova).

(Many thanks to Prof. Fabrizio Marongiu Buonaiuti, University of Macerata, for the tip-off)

Praxis des Internationalen Privat-

und Verfahrensrechts (IPRax) 5/2016: Abstracts

The latest issue of the "Praxis des Internationalen Privat- und Verfahrensrechts (IPRax)" features the following articles:

B. Hess: **The impacts of the Brexit on European private international and procedural law**
This article explores the consequences of the *Brexit* on European private international and procedural law. Although Article 50 TEU provides for a two year transitional period, the (adverse) consequences will affect the London judicial market immediately. Following this transitional period, the Brussels Ibis Regulation and all EU instruments in their area of law will no longer apply to the United Kingdom. A substitution by the Lugano Convention will be difficult, but the United Kingdom might ratify the Hague Choice of Court Convention and the (future) Hague Judgments Convention. In the course of the two-year period, parties should carefully consider whether choice of courts agreements in favour of London will lose their validity after *Brexit*. In international company law, United Kingdom companies operating on the Continent should verify whether their legal status will be recognized after the *Brexit*. In family matters, the legal status of EU (secondary) legislation should be respected even after the *Brexit*. All in all, European private international law will be affected by the cultural loss of the English law. And the same will apply vice versa to English law.

R. Freitag: **Explicit and Implicit Limitations of the Scope of Application of Regulations Rome I and Rome II**
Almost ten years after the enactment of Regulation "Rome II" on the law applicable to non-contractual obligations and nine years after the publication in the Official Journal of Regulation "Rome I" on the law applicable to contractual obligations, the fundamental question of the material scope of application of the uniform private international law of the EU remains unanswered: Are the aforementioned regulations limited to contracts in the strict sense of voluntarily incurred obligations (governed by Regulation "Rome I") and to torts, unjust enrichment, *negotiorum gestio* and *culpa in contrahendo* (as defined in Regulation "Rome II") or are both regulations to be seen as an ensemble forming a comprehensive regime for the law of obligations (with the exception of the

matters explicitly mentioned in art. 1 par. (2) of Regulation Rome I and Rome II respectively)? The answer is of practical importance for a significant number of institutions of national substantive law that are characterized by their hybrid nature positioning them between contracts and legal obligations which cannot be qualified as torts, unjust enrichment etc. The aim of the article is to show that despite the fact that an all-encompassing European regime of conflict of laws is highly desirable, the existing Regulations "Rome I" and "Rome II" remain eclectic. They do not allow for a uniform treatment of all relevant institutions of substantive law and namely their rules on mandatory provisions (art. 9 Regulation "Rome I", art. 16 Regulation "Rome II") cannot be activated to this end.

K. Thorn/C. Lasthaus: **The „CAS-Ruling" of the German Federal Court of Justice – Carte Blanche for Sports Arbitration?**
In its judgement, the German Federal Court of Justice (*BGH*) ruled on the legal validity of an arbitration agreement in favour of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (*CAS*) between an athlete and an international sports federation. Even though sports federations constitute a monopoly and as a result, athletes are not free to choose between arbitration and courts of law without losing their status as a professional, the agreement is legally effective according to the *BGH*, thus precluding the parties from settling their dispute before courts of law. In this legal review, the authors argue that – due to the athletes' lack of freedom – arbitration agreements in sport can only be considered effective if they lead to a court of arbitration constituting a minimum rule of law. With regards to the *CAS* and considering the influence of sports federations in the establishment of the *CAS*' list of arbitrators, they take the view that the *CAS* does not fulfil such minimum legal requirements. Furthermore, they criticise the fact that an arbitrator is not required to disclose previous appointments by one of the parties involved in the current arbitration procedure. This way, the right to refuse an arbitrator suffers devaluation. Notwithstanding the fact that the international sporting system requires consistent interpretation and application of sporting rules by an international arbitration court in order to establish equal opportunities among the athletes, this must not be achieved at the expense of the athletes' constitutional rights. Due to the aforementioned legal deficits, the *BGH* should have ruled the agreement void.

C. Mayer: **Judicial determination of paternity with regard to embryos: characterization, private international law, substantive law**

The Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf had to decide on a motion to determine the legal paternity of a sperm donor with regard to nine embryos, who are currently deep frozen and stored in a fertility clinic in California. The hasty recourse to the German law of decent by the court overlooks the preceding issue whether assessing, as of when the judicial determination of paternity is possible, is to be qualified as a question of procedure or substantive law and is, thus, to be solved according to the *lex fori* or *lex causae*. Furthermore, the court's considerations concerning the conflict-of-laws provisions, denying the analogous application of Art. 19 par. 1 s. 1 *EGBGB* (Introductory Act to the German Civil Code), are not convincing, the more so as it left the question unanswered which conflict-of-laws provision decides on the applicable law instead.

K. Siehr: **Criminal Responsibility of the Father for Abduction of his own Daughter**

A man of Syrian nationality and a woman married in Germany and had a daughter. The couple finally divorced and parental responsibility was given exclusively to the mother. In December 2006 the couple decided to visit the father's relatives in Syria in order to spend Christmas vacation with them, to detract the daughter from bad influences in Germany and to change the daughter's name. The daughter felt very uncomfortable in Syria, because she was not allowed to go to school and could not leave her relatives' home without being accompanied by some elderly person of her relatives. She wanted to go back to Germany, but was not allowed to do so by her father. Her mother tried to enable her to leave Syria with the help of the German embassy, but this could not be realized. The daughter was beaten by her father and the mother was prohibited to have contact with her daughter. After having reached majority age, the daughter managed to go back to Germany, where the mother indicted the father for depriving a minor from the person having exclusive parental responsibility (§ 235 German Criminal Code). The County Court of Koblenz convicted the father of being guilty of dangerous bodily harm (§ 223a German Criminal Code) and of depriving a minor from her mother (§ 235 German Criminal Code). The Federal Court for Civil and Criminal Cases (*Bundesgerichtshof = BGH*) confirmed this decision and rejected the attorney general's and the accused's appeal against it. The Federal Court correctly decided that German criminal law applies, because the person, having exclusive parental responsibility, had her habitual residence in Germany, hence the result of deprivation was also felt in Germany. The Federal Court also correctly held that the private law question of parental responsibility

has to be answered by German law, including German private international law.

C.F. Nordmeier: **Acceptance and waiver of the succession and their avoidance according to the Introductory Act to the German Civil Code and to Regulation (EU) No. 650/2012**

In matters of succession, a *renvoi* that results in the scission of the estate causes particular problems. The present contribution discusses acceptance and waiver of the succession and their avoidance in a case involving German and Thai law. The law applicable to the formal validity of such declarations is determined by art. 11 of the Introductory Act to the German Civil Code. It covers the question whether the declaration must be made before an authority or a court if this is provided for by the *lex successionis* without prescribing a review as to its content. In case of the avoidance of the acceptance of the succession based on a mistake about its over-indebtedness, the ignorance of the scission of the estate may serve as a base for voidability. The second part of the present contribution deals with Regulation (EU) No. 650/2012. Art. 13 of the Regulation applies in the case of the scission of the estate even if only a part of the estate is located in a Member State and the declaration at hand does not concern this part. Avoidance and revocation of the declarations mentioned in art. 13 and art. 28 of the Regulation are covered by these norms.

W. Wurmnest: **The applicability of the German-Iranian Friendship and Settlement Treaty to inheritance disputes and the role of German public policy**

Based on a judgment of the District Court Hamburg-St. Georg, the article discusses the conditions under which the applicable law in succession matters has to be determined in accordance with the German-Iranian Friendship and Settlement Treaty of 1929, which takes precedence over the German conflict rules and those of Regulation (EU) No. 650/2012. The article further elaborates on the scope of the German public policy threshold with regard to the application of Iranian succession law. It is argued that the disinheritance of an heir as a matter of law would be incompatible with German public policy if based on the heir either having a different religion than the testator or having the status of illegitimate child. However, these grounds will be upheld if the discrimination has been specifically approved by the testator.

C. Thole: **Discharge under foreign law and German transaction avoidance**

The judgment of the Federal Court of Justice deals with the question whether

recognition of an automatic discharge obtained by the debtor in an English insolvency proceeding excludes a subsequent non-insolvency action based on German law on fraudulent transfers. The Court rightly negates this question, however, the court's reasoning is not completely convincing. In particular, the judgment entails a bunch of follow-up questions with respect to the interdependency between a foreign insolvency or restructuring proceeding and German fraudulent transfer law (outside of insolvency proceedings).

F. Ferrari/F. Rosenfeld: **Yukos revisited – A case comment on the set-aside decision in Yukos Universal Limited (Isle of Man) et al. v. Russia**
In a decision of 20/4/2016, the District Court of The Hague set aside six arbitral awards that had been rendered in the proceedings *Yukos Universal Limited (Isle of Man) et. al.* against *Russia*. The arbitral tribunal had ordered *Russia* to pay compensation for its breach of the Energy Charta Treaty. According to the District Court of The Hague, the arbitral tribunal had erroneously found that the Energy Charta Treaty was provisionally applicable. For this reason, the arbitral tribunal could not base its jurisdiction on the arbitration clause set forth in Art. 26 Energy Charta Treaty. The present case note examines the set-aside decision of the District Court of The Hague as well as its implications for ongoing enforcement proceedings. Various approaches towards the enforceability of annulled arbitral awards will be presented.

P. Mankowski: **Embargoes, Foreign Policy in PIL, Respecting Facts: Art. 9 (3) Rome I Regulation in Practice**
Internationally mandatory rules of third states are a much discussed topic. But only rarely they produce court cases. Amongst the cases, foreign embargoes provide for the highlights. The USA has graced the world with their shades. Yet the *Cour d'appel de Paris* makes short shrift with the (then) US embargo against the Iran and simply invokes Art. 9 (3) of the Rome I Regulation – or rather the *conclusio a contrario* to be drawn from this rule – to such avail. It does not embark upon the intricacies of conflicting foreign policies but sticks with a technical and topical line of argument. Blocking statutes forming part of the law of the forum state explicitly adds the political dimension.

C. Thomale: **On the recognition of Ukranian surrogacy-based Certificates of Paternity in Italy**
The Italian Supreme Court denied recognition of a Ukrainian birth certificate stipulating intended parents of an alleged surrogacy arrangement as the legal

parents of a newborn. The reasoning given by the Court covers fundamental questions regarding the notions of the public policy exception, the superior interest of the child as well as the relationship between surrogacy and adoption. The comment elaborates on those considerations and argues for adoption reform.

M. Zilinsky: **The new conflict of laws in the Netherlands: The introduction of Boek 10 BW**
On 1/1/2012, the 10th book of the Dutch Civil Code (Boek 10 (Internationaal Privaatrecht) Burgerlijk Wetboek) entered into force in the Netherlands. Herewith the Dutch Civil Code is supplemented by a new part by which the different Dutch Conflict of Laws Acts are replaced and are combined to form one legal instrument. The first aim of this legislative process was the consolidation of the Dutch Conflict of Laws. The second aim was the codification of certain developed in legal practice. This article is not a complete treatise on the Dutch Conflict of Laws. The article intends to give only a short explanation of the new part of the Civil Code.

Praxis des Internationalen Privat- und Verfahrensrechts (IPRax) 4/2016: Abstracts

The latest issue of the "Praxis des Internationalen Privat- und Verfahrensrechts (IPRax)" features the following articles:

F. Eichel, **Private International Law Aspects of Arbitration Clauses in Favor of the Court of Arbitration for Sport**
The validity of arbitration clauses in favor of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has been called into question by German courts in the long running proceedings of Claudia Pechstein against the International Skating Union. The courts held that the arbitration clause in the athletes' admission form was void. They referred to provisions in German Civil Law (s. 138 German Civil Code – BGB;

s. 19 Act against Restraints of Competition – GWB) which are recognized as being internationally applicable so that the German courts could apply them even though the validity of the arbitration clause was governed by Swiss law. The article reflects the Private International Law aspects of these arbitration clauses illustrating that both the relevant law of International Civil Procedure as well as the choice of law provisions primarily serve the interests of commercial arbitration and thereby reinforce the structural imbalance existing between the sports association and the athlete when signing such arbitration clauses. Against this background, the article argues that the special circumstances of sport arbitration would allow the application of the German law of standard terms (s. 307 BGB) although it is, in principle, not considered to form part of the general ordre public-reservation in Private International Law.

Th. Pfeiffer, **Ruhestandsmigration und EU-Erbrechtsverordnung**
From a German perspective, the most significant change that was brought about by the EU Succession Regulation is the transition from referring to the deceased's nationality as the general connecting factor to the deceased's habitual residence. This transition reflects an analysis of interests which is primarily based on cases of migrant professionals or workers and their families. However, there is also a large group of migrants already retired at the time of their migration (e.g. the large group of German pensioners on the Spanish island of Mallorca). Their situation is different from migrant workers insofar as their migration occurs at a moment when the most significant decisions in their lives have been made already; as a consequence, migration at that age, usually, does not include following generations. Moreover, it is not unlikely that, in many cases, migrating pensioners, when planning for their estates, will not consider the laws of their new habitual residence. Based on this analysis, this article asks how the EU Succession Regulation addresses these particularities of migrating pensioners. In particular, it is discussed under which circumstances the laws of their home state (based on their nationality) may remain applicable. In this context, the article considers: (1) provisions which do not refer to the moment of deceased's death but to an earlier event, (2) the need for an appropriate definition of habitual residence, (3) the escape clause in Art. 21 (2) of the Regulation, (4) a choice of law by the deceased and (5) waivers of succession. The article concludes that the Regulation is open for applying the laws of the deceased's nationality to a certain extent but that this law must not be applied automatically if the principle of referring to the deceased's habitual residence is taken seriously.

A. Brand, **Damages Claims and Torpedo Actions – The Principle of Priority of Art. 29 para 1 Brussels I-Regulation with a particular focus on Cartel Damages Claims.**

Forum shopping by way of „Torpedo actions“ is an unwanted means of a tortfeasor to secure the jurisdiction of their home country rather than having to defend themselves before the courts at the seat of the injured plaintiff. This has gained particular relevance in proceedings concerning cartel-damages claims. The race hunt to the court could and should be avoided by strictly applying the principles of procedural efficiency and fair trial and the requirement of a justified interest for an action for (negative) declaration. As under domestic law, the principle of priority as laid down in art. 29 para. 1 of the Brussels I-Regulation cannot be applied to torpedo actions in case of tort.

W.-H. Roth, **Jurisdictional issues of competition damages claims**

In its CDC-judgment the Court of Justice for the first time had the chance to rule on several issues of jurisdiction concerning cartel-inflicted damages. Claimant was an undertaking specifically set up for the purpose of pursuing such damage claims that had been transferred to her by potential cartel victims. The Court deals with jurisdiction over multiple defendants (Art. 6 No. 1 Regulation EC 44/2001), the scope of tort jurisdiction (Art. 5 No. 3), based on the place where the event giving rise to the damage occurred and on the place where the damage occurred, and with the interpretation of jurisdiction clauses (Art. 23) potentially covering cartel-inflicted damage claims. The results reached and the arguments advanced by the Court, taken all in all, deserve applause. Given that the judgment deals with a setting of a follow-on action (with a binding decision by the EU-Commission) it will have to be clarified whether the main results of the judgment can also be applied in stand-alone actions.

R. Hüßtege, **A tree must be bent while it is young**

The Federal Constitutional Court of Germany reprimands that the district court in an adoption procedure did not use all sources of knowledge in accordance to the Council Regulation (EC) No 1206/2001 of 28 May 2001 on cooperation between the courts of the Member States in the taking of evidence in civil or commercial matters and to the European Judicial Network, in order to determine whether an effective Romanian adoption exists. Due to this omission fundamental rights of the complainant were injured in the adoption case concerning the recognition of the Romanian decision. This case shows that instruments, like the mentioned

regulation and the European Judicial Network in commercial and civil matters are not well known to courts. There is an urgent need for training of judges.

C. F. Nordmeier, **Lis pendens under art. 16 Brussels IIa and Art. 32 Brussels Ia when proceedings are stayed**

The case at hand deals with the decisive moment for lis pendens according to art. 16 (1) (a) Brussels IIa (equivalent to art. 32 (1) (a) Brussels Ia) if proceedings are stayed before service in order to reach an amicable arrangement. The provision contains an own obligation of the applicant. Whether a delay of service restrains lis pendens depends on the breach of this obligation being imputable to the applicant. Intention or negligence should not serve as a basis to impute the breach. The present contribution analyses different types of delay and its imputability: stay of proceedings to reach an amicable arrangement, deficiencies of the documents submitted for service and mistakes of the court while effecting service. For the continuance of lis pendens the author argues that a stay or an interruption of proceedings does not abolish the effects of lis pendens.

B. Heiderhoff, **Perpetuatio fori in custody proceedings**

Even if parents, as in the case at hand, have joint parental responsibility with the exception of the right to determine the child's place of residence, the parent who has the sole right to determine the child's place of residence may lawfully move abroad with the child. The other parent has to accept the complications in exercising parental responsibility. If the child is relocating its habitual residence to a state that is not a member state of the EU, but a signatory state to the Hague 1996 Children's Convention, the Convention must be applied. This is clearly stated in Art. 61 Brussels II-Regulation. Unlike Art. 8 Brussels II-Regulation, the 1996 Children's Convention does not follow the principle of perpetuatio fori. In order to prevent a parent from taking a child abroad during ongoing court proceedings, the courts should regularly consider an injunction by which the right to determine residence of the child is limited to Germany. This applies particularly when both parents have joint responsibility and merely the isolated right to determine the child's place of residence is assigned to one parent. If one parent has sole custody at the beginning of the procedure, the interests must be weighed differently. The right to move abroad with the child during the proceedings should, in general, only be excluded if there is a rather serious chance for the affected parent to lose sole custody.

U. P. Gruber, **How to modify decisions on maintenance obligations**

In scholarly writing, proceedings to modify decisions on maintenance obligations have only attracted limited attention. However, these proceedings raise very intricate und unsolved problems of characterization. The Bundesgerichtshof, in a new decision, has tackled some of the questions while leaving others unanswered. In the author's opinion, the modification of decisions on maintenance obligations is governed by the Hague Protocol of 23 November 2007. The convention's predecessor, the Hague Convention of 2 October 1973, also covered the modification of decisions, and it can be presumed that the Hague Protocol, as far as its scope is concerned, follows the Hague Convention. The procedural framework of the proceedings to modify decisions on maintenance obligations, however, is governed by the lex fori, i.e. the law of the state in which the proceedings to modify the decision are brought. The Hague Protocol of 23 November 2007 is part of EU law. Therefore, it seems likely that the ECJ will be requested to decide on the issue. Whether or not the ECJ will support the application of the Hague Protocol seems impossible to predict.

K. Siehr, **Execution of Foreign Order to Return an Abducted Child**

A child was abducted by his mother from Germany to Poland and after one year re-abducted by his father to Germany. Instead of asking German courts for a return order under the EU Regulation No. 2201/2003 on Matrimonial Matters and Matters of Parental Responsibility the father turned to Polish courts and asked for a return order. Such an order was turned down because the child, in the meantime, had been abducted by the father to Germany. The mother asked the Polish court for a return order and got it as an urgent order because of the habitual residence of the child in Poland. The mother asked German courts to recognize and enforce this Polish order to return the child to Poland. The Court of Appeals of Munich recognized and enforced the Polish return order. The Munich court did not recognize the return order neither under Art. 42 nor under Art. 28 et seq. Regulation 2201/2003 because relevant certificates were missing or some enforcement obstacles (hearing of the father in Poland) were given. The German court decided that the Polish return order should be recognized and enforced under the Hague Convention of 1996 on the Protection of Children without taking care of Art. 61 of the Regulation 2201/2003 which give precedence to the Regulation in this case. Jurisdiction of the Polish court is determined according to Art. 20 of the Regulation and Art. 11 of the Hague Convention of 1996 which granted only territorially limited jurisdiction to local courts in urgent matters. In this case, however, the child was not any more in Poland but in Germany. The

German court is criticized because of not explaining properly the application of the Hague Convention of 1996 under Art. 61 of Regulation 2201/2003 and because of misinterpreting Art. 20 of the Regulation 2201/2203 and of Art. 11 Hague Convention by giving them universal jurisdiction.

D. Looschelders, **Problems of Characterization and Adaptation in German-Italian Successions**

German-Italian successions often raise difficult legal questions. In its decision, the Higher Regional Court of Duesseldorf firstly deals with the invalidity of joint wills under Italian law. The main part of the decision is concerned with problems of characterization and adaptation. In the present case, these problems arise due to the parallel applicability of Italian Succession Law and German Matrimonial Property Law. The author supports the decision in general. However, it is stated that the courts considerations with regard to the necessity of adaptation are not convincing in all respects. Finally, it is shown how the problems of the case were to be solved in accordance with the European Succession Regulation which was not yet applicable.

C. Mayer, **Ancillary matrimonial property regime and conflict of laws – characterization of claims arising from an undisclosed partnership between spouses.**

While it is generally agreed that the legal regime for undisclosed partnerships follows the law applicable to contractual obligations, there is debate as regards undisclosed partnerships between spouses. Due to their special connection with the matrimonial property regime, it is argued that compensation claims arising from undisclosed partnerships between spouses are to be characterized as matrimonial. Along with the prevailing opinion, the German Federal Court of Justice now correctly supports a characterization as contractual. Given, however, the close relation to the matrimonial property regime, the court proposes an accessory connection: the partnership agreement is closest connected to the law governing matrimonial property. Subject to criticism is, however, the far-reaching willingness of the court to find an implied choice of law by the spouses.

M. Stöber, **Discharge of Residual Debt and Insolvency Avoidance Actions in Cross-Border Insolvencies with Main and Secondary Proceedings**

15 years after the adoption of the European Regulation on Insolvency Proceedings in the year 2000, it is still difficult to answer the question which national insolvency law applies to cross-border insolvency proceedings within the

European Union. The case that – in addition to main insolvency proceedings in one member state – secondary insolvency proceedings have been opened in another member state of the European Union is of particular complexity. In two recent judgments, the German Supreme Court has decided on the impact the opening of secondary proceedings in another state has on a discharge of residual debt (judgement of 18 September 2014) and on insolvency avoidance actions respectively (judgement of 20 November 2014) granted by the national law applicable to the main proceedings opened in the first state.

C. Kohler, **Claims for the payment of holiday allowances by a public fund for paid leave for workers: "civil and commercial" or "administrative" matters?**

By its ruling in BGE 141 III 28 the Swiss Federal Court refused to enforce in Switzerland an Austrian judgment according to which a Swiss company had to make payments to the Austrian fund for paid leave for workers in the construction industry that were due for workers posted to Austria by the defendant company. According to the Federal Court, the judgment is outside the scope of the Lugano-Convention as it has not been given in a "civil and commercial matter" as required by art. 1 thereof. The ways and means by which the Austrian fund claimed the payments constituted the exercise of public powers and differed from the legal relationship between the parties to an employment contract. The author submits that the judgment of the Federal Court is not in line with the ECJ's case-law on art. 1 of the Brussels instruments. In order to assess whether a case is a "civil and commercial matter", one has to look not at the modalities for the enforcement but at the origin of the right which forms the subject matter of the proceedings. In the instant case the right to paid leave stems from the employment contract and is of a private law character. As the Federal Court sees no legal basis for the enforcement of the Austrian judgment outside the Lugano-Convention, its judgment leaves a gap in the judicial protection of posted workers' rights as between Austria and Switzerland contrary to the objective of Directive 96/71 which applies according to the bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU.